

Hello, let's start with a prayer.

Jesus, I pray that every word spoken be anointed by the Holy Spirit and that every person will listen with their spiritual ears and open their spiritual eyes to the truth of God's Word. Jesus by divine revelation help the people to realize that now is the time to seek God and righteousness. Help the listeners see that governments and mighty military weapons and modern technology and state of the art medical science combined will not be able to provide protection or answers regarding the suffering that will come upon the earth in the end time great tribulation period that Jesus prophesied to his disciples in Matthew 24 of the Bible. I pray this teaching on your Word will not return void, but it will accomplish the purposes of God. Holy Spirit reveal to listeners today that Jesus is the only answer to their suffering. In Jesus name, Amen.

Last week I read Matthew 24 from the Bible. This week, I will start going through the chapter a few verses at a time and give some insights and commentary about these scriptures. I am going to try and demonstrate how these words Jesus spoke almost two thousand years ago reflect many events that are occurring in our world today. I want to show how relevant these prophetic words of Jesus are today and how they apply to you and your families lives and futures. I have taught many times that God's Word says that we suffer for the lack of knowledge. So I am going to be giving you knowledge about what God's Word says is going to happen to this earth as we enter the end time or great tribulation period of this world. I feel it is my Christian duty to impart, first what the Bible says, by reading directly from the Bible the actual prophetic scriptures and then reveal my knowledge or explanation of these scriptures in order to prevent many from suffering. So stayed tuned for the next few weeks as we look at Matthew 24 and what Jesus told His closest companions, regarding the signs of the end time or some call it the "great tribulation" period leading up to and prior to the Second Coming of Jesus to earth.

Here is Matthew 24:1-2

As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings.

2 But he responded, "Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"

The temple that they were leaving was the Second Temple. The first temple or Solomon's temple had been destroyed by the Babylonians in about 586 BCE. The Jews were exiled, but they returned and built the Second Temple about 349 BCE. It was the Second Temple that Jesus is referring to in Matthew 24 and prophesized that it would be destroyed and the unusual manner in which it would be destroyed. This conversation between Jesus and His disciples occurred in about 33 CE shortly before Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. Jesus predicted the destruction and the specific manner of destruction of the Second Temple about 35 years before the Romans tore the temple apart--stone by stone down to the foundation.

Not one stone will be left on top of another is a detail that Jesus uses to describe and predict the ruin of the temple. Archaeological evidence proves that this is what the Romans did in 70 CE to utterly destroy the temple. Now why would a foreign army take the time and trouble to totally dismantle a large building down to its very foundations. After all, these were very large stones, so there must have been a specific reason to pry each stone apart.

The historian Josephus gives us some insight into the Roman's motives. The temple had great quantities of gold and silver stored there. It was like Israel's Fort Knox. Also, many of the walls of the temple were covered or draped in gold. In addition, people would hide their gold and silver in the walls of their buildings.

The temple was first burned by the Roman army and it was possible that the gold and silver melted and filled the spaces between the stones. Consequently, to retrieve the precious metals, the Romans had to pry the stones apart, one by one.

So in the very first verses in this chapter, we have evidence today that Jesus very accurately predicted this event and in detail, almost 35 years before it occurred. Anyone could have predicted that the

temple would be robbed, burned, or shaken by an earthquake. But Jesus described the destruction in a very specific manner. Just that one prediction coming true defies the odds of this just being a really good educated guess on the part of Jesus. So that makes me inclined to put faith in the rest of the scriptures in Matthew 24 that they will come to pass, just as Jesus prophesied.

Now let's read further, Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?"

In this scripture, Jesus and His disciples have left the temple and are sitting on the Mount of Olives and the disciples start to ask questions about when these events will occur and what signs will signal the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world.

Now what I notice in this scripture is that Jesus is not talking to a great multitude or teaching these events publically in the temple, but He tells His closest companions in private about the signs of the end times. These are the men that he ate with, travelled with, worshipped and prayed with. Why does Jesus limit this prophetic conversation to just his closest followers, His inner circle?

I think Jesus is revealing that this knowledge is straight talk between close friends. Jesus is setting the tone and the context by which we should read these scriptures and interpret them today. In other words, Jesus was not going to leave any doubt as to what the signs of His return and of the end times would look like. Jesus was being very specific. These were His closest friends and He was not going to skip on the details. He knew that he would be crucified soon and He wanted to be sure that the disciples knew exactly what to expect and to teach the future generations and to record in the Bible for His followers that would actually have to live during this period of time. Jesus is not mysterious and vague. He is basically telling it like it will be, no sugar coating.

This private conversation that Jesus has with His best friends does not mention any "secret rapture". Jesus does not reference any covert, closet, or restricted gathering of His believers prior to His second coming. I can't imagine Jesus not disclosing such an

important detail about a "secret gathering together" of His believers prior to His actual second coming to His closest and most intimate followers. I think if such an important event as a "secret rapture" was going to take believers up in the air and remove them off the face of the earth prior to or during the great tribulation and separate from the event of His actual second coming that Jesus would have spelled it out and made that rescue of believers very distinct from His second coming. Jesus has no reason to be mysterious or vague about anything. He is warning His best friends. You don't talk in riddles when you are trying to warn your family or friends about something as important as the end of time.

Now I know many of my listeners have been taught that there will be a "secret rapture" of God's believers prior to or during the tribulation time, in fact, I was taught that as a child. I won't argue with you about it. The question is, whether you believe in a rapture or not, will that prevent you from being saved or having eternal life. I don't think you will lose your soul, if you believe in a rapture or not.

However, Jesus is very adamant in Matthew 24 about being deceived in the end times. He warns us to not be deceived in several verses. So, if you are a Christian that believes that you and your loved ones that are saved will be rescued off the earth and escape the tribulation, would that change the way you might prepare for your future. If you thought that you might have to actually endure the tribulation to the end, would you change some things in your life. If you believed that you or your children or your grandchildren would have to deal with the choice of taking a mark of the antichrist or be killed, would that change what you teach them.

Would you get a little disillusioned, and even angry with God or your Bible teachers, if you were looking to escape the extreme hardships of the tribulation and the reign of the antichrist and you are actually forced to endure persecution, imprisonment, and even death for the sake of the gospel? The kind of persecution that will be given out during the great tribulation will be the worst that the earth has ever experienced. Are you going to be physically, mentally, or spiritually prepared for that kind of hardship, if you are looking to escape?

I just want you to think about this with some common sense. Why does Jesus tell His closest friends about all the horrors of the tribulation, if believers will not have to experience it and try to survive it? Why didn't Jesus just say, "Oh don't worry about the end time and tribulation, because I am going to secretly whisk you up into the clouds and take you off the earth in a separate event called the rapture? My actual second coming and return won't come until after the tribulation and my believers won't even be here. So why waste my time, let's go eat.

No that is not what Jesus did. Jesus went into a very descriptive conversation, outlining the details of the signs of His second coming and the end of the world because He knew that His followers would be ON THE EARTH and that believers would have to know how to prepare for persecution, and imprisonment, and the antichrist, and the mark of the beast, and famines, and wars, and plagues, and earthquakes, and the breakdown of society, and false teachers, and deception, and death.

Remember, Matthew 24 is almost entirely in the Words of Jesus. Jesus spoke plainly and directly to His disciples in this passage. It was Jesus confiding and warning His inner circle of friends, because He knew His followers would be ON THE EARTH and have to endure the worst tribulation the world has ever seen.

So I will be sharing insights on Matthew 24 from the perspective that ALL believers will remain on the earth prior to and during the tribulation, because I think Jesus would have specifically warned and described and named a separate event like a secret rapture in this private conversation regarding His return and the end of the world to His disciples.

I will end it there for today.

Thank you for listening and God bless you.

4 Jesus told them, "Don't let anyone mislead you,

5 for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.'
They will deceive many.

6 And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic.
Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow
immediately.

7 Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against
kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of
the world.

8 But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

9 "Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be
hated all over the world because you are my followers.*

10 And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each
other.

11 And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many
people.

12 Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow
cold.

13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

14 And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached
throughout the whole world, so that all nations* will hear it; and
then the end will come.